



PRESS RELEASE
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**PESSAMIT SOLIDARITY MARCH: A MOBILIZATION THAT MUST LEAD TO
CONCRETE COMMITMENTS FOR THE SAFETY OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN,
ACCORDING TO QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN**

Wendake, August 31, 2026 – Quebec Native Women (QNW) marched alongside the Pessamit community during the Solidarity March for Victims of Violence, held on August 29 in Pessamit. This important mobilization followed the serious assault of three Innu women, including an Elder, on August 16.

For QNW, this mobilization demonstrated the strength, resilience, and determination of communities to break the silence and take action against violence. It also underscored the urgent need to intensify efforts to ensure the safety of Indigenous women and girls throughout Quebec. The issue of violence extends far beyond the boundaries of the Pessamit community, the Innu Nation, or the Côte-Nord region. It is a collective responsibility that requires a coordinated response from all concerned stakeholders.

“The expressions of solidarity witnessed in recent days must now translate into clear, courageous political commitments that bring about lasting change. The safety of Indigenous women and children can no longer be sidelined. It must become a shared responsibility across all levels of governance and a tangible indicator of reconciliation. The next Government of Quebec must work in partnership with First Nations and Indigenous women’s organizations to address the urgency of the situation,” said Ms. Marjolaine Étienne, President of Quebec Native Women.

QNW calls on all First Nations Chiefs in Quebec to continue the wave of mobilization initiated in Pessamit by making the safety of women and girls a priority within their respective governments. Concrete measures must be implemented in the areas of prevention, intervention, and support services in order to help build safer, violence-free communities.

In the context of the ongoing election campaign, QNW is also calling on all political leaders to make the safety of Indigenous women a non-negotiable priority in their electoral commitments. The organization is calling for concrete, measurable, and adequately funded commitments, accompanied by accountability mechanisms and developed through shared decision-making with Indigenous women’s organizations. These commitments must include, among other measures, the implementation of the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls that are specific to Quebec, particularly Calls #5, #8, and #11, which Indigenous women’s organizations have identified as priorities, as well as the official recognition of systemic racism and discrimination by the next Government of Quebec.

A Wave of Solidarity Extending Beyond Pessamit

This initiative brought together community members, families, organizations, allies, and leaders in a collective show of solidarity with victims of violence in all its forms and with individuals affected by addiction. Additional marches were held the same day in other Innu

communities as a sign of support, demonstrating that this issue resonates far beyond Pessamit and concerns all communities.

“The August 29 march carried a powerful message of solidarity, healing, and hope, while highlighting the strength and resilience of the Pessamit community in the face of adversity,” said Ms. Véronique Rankin, Executive Director of Quebec Native Women.

QNW wishes to acknowledge the work of the organizing committee behind the Pessamit Solidarity March. The organization remains fully committed to continuing its awareness-raising, advocacy, and defense of the individual and collective rights of First Nations women and girls, with the goal of making the safety of Indigenous women and girls a top priority at every level of governance.

About QNW

Quebec Native Women is a nonprofit organization that has represented and defended the rights and interests of First Nations women and girls in Quebec for over 50 years.

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Photo, from left to right: Ghislain Picard, previous Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL); Mrs. Marielle Vachon, Chief of Pessamit First Nation; and Mrs. Marjolaine Étienne, Quebec Native Women (QNW) president.

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